VOLUNTARY BUYOUT PROGRAM BUSINESS JUSTIFICATION TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

I. Executive Summary

A reorganization is required for the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs to improve customer service through expanded expertise, increased qualifications, streamlined processes and reallocation of resources.

The department presently believes the positions identified in this plan need to be eliminated or reclassified regardless of whether VBP-eligible employees elect the VBP. However, no position eliminations or reclassifications will occur until after VBP participants have separated from employment on July 31, 2015. Any position eliminations or the like will be conducted in accordance with State law, including notice requirements

The department will restructure the Claims Division to improve preparation of appeals, support and representation for customers involved in the appeals process with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

- (a) The department has identified Claims Director, classified as Admin Services Assistant 5, as eligible for the Volunteer Buyout Program (VBP) for the following reasons:
 - (i) The Claims Division is being reorganized to include additional legal expertise.
 - (ii) This position will be discontinued.
- (b) Veterans Claims Specialists have also been identified as eligible for the VBP for the following reasons:
 - (i) The Claims Division is being reorganized to include additional legal expertise.
 - (ii) This position will be discontinued.
- (c) Administrative Assistant 2 in the Claims Division has been identified as eligible for the VBP for the following reason:
 - (i) Due to the reorganization of the Claims Division, this position is no longer necessary.

The department will also restructure the outreach capabilities in the three regions of the state to better serve customers and improve relationships as well as mentoring opportunities with local partners.

- (d) All Veterans Benefits Representative- 3 employees have been identified as eligible for the VBP for the following reasons:
 - (i) This classification is inconsistent across the state with some in supervisory roles while others are in one person offices unable to effectively mentor county service officers due to the claims assistance component of the classification.
 - (ii) This classification will be discontinued.
- (e) The Veterans Benefits Representative-2 in the Sevierville field office has been identified as eligible for the VBP for the following reason:
 - (i) Due to the hiring of a county service officer in Sevier County, the customer need for a state field office has declined in this area. Therefore, the office will be closed.
- (f) The Admin Services Assistant 2 position in Crossville has been identified as eligible for the VBP for the following reason:
 - (i) This position was direct support for the Regional Assistant Commissioner in East Tennessee. The Regional Commissioner has been relocated to a more central location to better serve the employees, customers and partners in the region.
- (g) The Secretary position in the Knoxville field office has been identified as eligible for the VBP for the following reason
 - (i) The customer traffic of the Knoxville field office requires administrative support with more specialized skills to offer preliminary claims assistance and preliminary interviewing capabilities in order improve the intake process as well as customer service.

II. Business Justification and Assessment

The Tennessee veteran population continues to change with a surge of more than 25,000 Gulf War veterans between 2012 and 2013. This population requires an increased focus on jobs, education and business resources to assist them with their transition. For the more senior veteran population, improved claims assistance and appeals preparation are critical to their objective of procuring federal benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

The reorganization of the department would improve the expertise of claims assistance, appeals preparation and representation, allow for increased partnerships in employment, education, business resources as well as involvement in Veteran Treatment Courts.

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III.	Estimated Net Cost Savings			
	The department will reallocate savings to restructure the Claims Division and regional support for claims assistance, educational services, Veteran Treatment Courts and local outreach.			
	Many-Bears Grinder Commissioner	Date		

The department's Volunteer Buyout Program would impact up to 16 employees, potentially close one field office and would reallocate savings in combined monthly